

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2039

ANSWERED ON:13.12.2004

THREAT TO KEDARNATH DHAM BY CHAURABARI GLACIER

Rawale Shri Mohan

**Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether Chaurabari Glacier has created many lakes due to impact of warm weather;
- (b) if so, whether Kedarnath Dham has been posed with a serious threat as a result thereof;
- (c) if so, whether the bursting of these lakes is likely to create a dangerous situation in the nearby areas; and
- (d) if so, the steps being taken by the Government to remedy the situation ?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA)

(a) Yes, Sir. The studies carried out by the Geological Survey of India (GSI) have revealed that the Chaurabari glacier, like the majority of Himalayan glaciers is passing through a phase of recession. This recession can be attributed to the warm weather which is a worldwide phenomenon. The formation of supra glacial lakes is a localised phenomenon and the collected water is released into melt water system at regular intervals without causing any major change in river hydrology. During the studies undertaken by GSI till 1997 only one big lake called 'Gandhi Sarovar' has been noticed.

(b) No, Sir. The Gandhi Sarovar lake is very old and was in existence even before 1962. In 1997 observation, the water level was found to be lower than 1992-1994 period which suggests of a regular outlet. The shrine is located at a higher terrace in the out wash plain and the same is not likely to be threatened by the bursting of small supra glacial lakes.

(c) No, Sir. The supra glacial lakes are different from the ones formed by damming as a result of land slides etc. They have natural outlets within the glacier for release of water and therefore, they do not pose threat of flash floods in downstream areas.

(d) The formation of lakes over the glaciers and in the adjacent areas is a natural process and its formation cannot be avoided. No significant change was noticed during the past studies (1992-94, 1997) and no report of any major change in water level of 'Gandhi Sarovar' has been received by GSI in recent times.